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TAGS: PREL PGOV AF IZ IR

SUBJECT: USUN AMB KHALILZAD REVIEWS IRAQ, AFGHANISTAN, PAKISTAN AND IRAN WITH UK OFFICIALS

REF: MAY 30 EMAIL EMB LONDON (GAYLE)-DEPT (NEA/IR AND P STAFF)

Classified By: Economic Minister Mark Tokola, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶11. (S) SUMMARY: Amb Khalilzad told UK national security advisor McDonald that he was realistic about the difficulties of completing a SOFA and strategic framework agreement with Iraq by July, but saw some progress on the ground. In Afghanistan, he believed the SGSR needed to fill key slots and approve an enhanced incentives package to attract staff. McDonald reported that the UK needs a Chapter 7 mandate to operate in Iraq. Once the UK completed training of the Iraqi forces in Basra, it would be done there.

¶12. (S) In a second meeting, FCO Political Director Mark Lyall Grant said Solana will visit Tehran June 14, and argued another UNCSR will be necessary assuming Iran rejects the P5 1 offer. Grant and Amb Khalilzad agreed Kai Eide's role in Afghanistan should be boosted and that Karzai needs sustained, structured help by western partners in making and sticking to tough decisions; regional security consultations with Pakistan may be a way to rebuild the Pakistan-Afghan relationship. END SUMMARY.

¶13. (S) USUN Amb Zalmay Khalilzad met with Simon McDonald, National Security Advisor to PM Brown at No 10 Downing Street May 30. DCM LeBaron, ELAB McNamara (note taker) and UK Cabinet Office Afghanistan desk officer Helen Evans sat in. Khalilzad and DCM, and Poloff Gayle (note taker), also met Friday May 30 with FCO Political Director Mark Lyall Grant.

Iraq

¶14. (S) McDonald and Amb Khalilzad agreed that everything to do with Iraq takes longer than expected. Nevertheless, there were some hopeful signs. The Iraqi operation in Basra had a positive impact on the Sunni community's view of the government, according to Amb Khalilzad. The military had performed fairly well. Al Qaeda was weakening. Its tactic of killing members of one community in hopes they would retaliate against the other was not working. Moreover, the government's improved standing with the Sunnis did not come at the expense of opinion in the Kurdish or Shia communities.

¶15. (S) McDonald noted ruefully that most of the "outside" forces performed well in Basra, but not the locally based 14th Division, which was plagued by desertions. The UK would have to "up its game", he said, to improve their training, and reconstitute a disbanded brigade. Then the UK's mission in Iraq would essentially be done.

¶16. (S) Amb Khalilzad told McDonald that the Iraqis had recently begun to inquire with whether it would be possible to do another Chapter VII resolution which would only have the purpose of protecting them against foreign claims. Amb Khalilzad advised that the USG had not developed a position,

but that he could not imagine such a resolution without including security elements. McDonald pointed out that his legal advisors told him there were things the UK could not do without a Chapter VII resolution.

Afghanistan

¶7. (S) Amb Khalilzad agreed with Grant that the situations in both Afghanistan and Pakistan are in a very delicate phase, and that messages of "tough love" are needed for Karzai, who seems to be becoming even more paralyzed by the onset of 2009 elections. Grant ticked off several areas as showing "good signs," including security in the south, a "slight improvement" in counter-narcotic statistics, and the performance so far of Kai Eide. On the other side of the ledger however, according to Grant, was the general question of governance, where the signs were "very poor" and reform, especially of the Afghan police, were needed. Grant made the general observation that the task in Afghanistan is "greater than that in Iraq," and noted "it used to be hard get Washington to focus" on Afghanistan, though that had changed.

¶8. (S) Grant said a "War Cabinet" group, established to help Karzai at this difficult stage, should include the U.S. and UK Ambassadors and Kai Eide as well. Grant said Karzai tends to act according to the views of "the last person to whom he spoke," and that he needs "professional staff to carry him through."

¶9. (S) Khalilzad said Karzai seems "frozen". Grant asked that USG work to persuade Karzai the UK is "on his side,"

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noting that Karzai's statements at Davos and elsewhere tend to undermine the support for him in the UK; Karzai needs to show leadership. Amb Khalilzad noted Karzai faces a tough re-election fight. Grant said the UK assesses Karzai's electability will depend on his improving the appearance of his own ability to deliver.

¶10. (S) McDonald agreed with Amb Khalilzad that Kai Eide was no Paddy Ashdowne, unfortunately, noting that there seemed to be some unhappiness in the UN system there; many key positions were still vacant. Amb Khalilzad described efforts to offer incentives, as the USG gave its staff, for dangerous duty in Afghanistan.

Pakistan

¶11. (S) Grant, who was once ambassador in Islamabad, said the new government is in such "disarray" that it is not focused on its relationship with Afghanistan, and that the role of the Awami League adds the complicating element of the "Greater Afghanistan" issue. Grant said "there will be great temptation" for the USG to act on targeting intelligence, to strike counter-terrorism targets inside Pakistan, but noted the fallout and damage from such strikes would be great.

¶12. (S) With respect to Pakistani relations with Afghanistan, Amb Khalilzad said there is an important UN angle, and that the "spirit of Bonn," including a more regional focus needs to be restored. Amb Khalilzad said an immediate step should be a reinvigoration of Pakistani-Afghan military-to-military consultations such as General Barro had conducted should be restored. Grant noted several layers would be involved, noted some meetings involving the Turks which had been "helpful," and that it is key to include Pakistan's ISI and its Afghan counterpart, on a continuing basis, "to build trust." Grant noted new ISI head General Taj "is good," and that in any arrangement Kay Eide must be made a player at the highest level, along with Karzai.

Iran: We'll Likely Need Another UNSCR

¶13. (S) (S) As reported ref, Grant told Amb Khalilzad

Solana's office had just set a firm date, of June 14-15, for the P5 1 offer to be delivered by Solana and Political Directors in Tehran. Grant said it was unlikely there would be an outright refusal of the offer by the regime, which was, in Grant's view, likely to give an ambiguous answer.

¶14. (S) Grant argued the P5 1 group will then be in a situation in which, in the UK view, it must push for another UNSC resolution. Noting the Chinese have already told HMG that there can absolutely be no more UNSC resolutions, Grant said the UK knows the obstacles are great but that "we have no choice," and that there must be a meaningful response if the Iranians are to be shown they cannot reject the international community with impunity. Grant argued partners "might have to gut" such a UNSCR, making it a mostly symbolic document, devoid of sanctions or teeth, but that such a follow-up measure would have political resonance and importance for Iran. Amb Khalilzad noted there is no USG position for now on this particular question, but agreed with Grant that the latest IAEA report is strong and serious.

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